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CBC Newsletter

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For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

Volume 56 February 2010 Number 1

Spring 2010 Meeting at Winston-Salem, NC

Lucy Quintilliano and Ron Clark

Would you like to learn to sketch a bird? We have an expert who will teach us!

Would you like to learn about the latest in birding gear? Join us at "The Well Equipped Birder" expo to check out the latest and greatest equipment!

Would you or your non-birding companion like to learn about the Moravian community in Salem? Check out Old Salem, Historic Bethabara or Bethania!

Would you like to learn about several great birding hotspots just minutes from I-40? The next time you drive across the state you'll know where to stop for great birding without going more than a few miles out of your way!

Come to Winston-Salem from April 30 to May 2, 2010 and learn all this and more. Our hotel is just minutes from the 1,200-acre Tanglewood Park and Arboretum, which has a variety of habitat including grasslands, woodlands, a swamp, a slough and frontage along the Yadkin River with bridges that support nesting colonies of Cliff Swallows. Reynolda Gardens, also just minutes from our hotel, is great for spring migrants. An Olive-sided Flycatcher has shown up here the past two springs. Miller Park in the heart of town is home to a nesting colony of Yellow-crowned Night-herons.

Another nearby destination is Historic Bethabara Park. Whether you're a history buff or not, you'll enjoy birding here, site of the first Moravian settlement in the Piedmont of North Carolina. Twenty miles of trails, boardwalks, and foot bridges traverse wetlands, fields and woods. These trails wind through the original village dating back to the mid-1700s, numerous archeological excavations, the old mill site, the God's Arch, and the Old Bethabara Cemetery. You may even want to stop in the museum and craft store.

Nearby State Parks include Stone Mountain, Pilot Mountain, and two that have been designated as Important Bird Areas: Hanging Rock, where we'll hope to see a breeding pair of Peregrine Falcons, and New River which holds the possibility of Black-billed Cuckoos, Willow Flycatchers, Golden-winged Warblers, and many Wood Ducks and Baltimore Orioles.

Field trips will venture to the Blue Ridge Parkway for full-day outings on both Friday and Saturday. We're fortunate to have input from Marcus Simpson, author of *Birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains* in planning the parkway outings. Marcus lives near Winston-Salem and spends a great deal of time scouring this section of the parkway. He knows where to go for our best shot at Cerulean, Swainson's, Golden-winged, Blackburnian and Canada Warblers, just to name a few.

We will have sessions both evenings, but we're changing it up a bit. Our banquet will be Friday evening fol-

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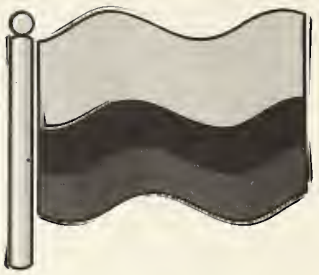
Taking the Plunge – Birding in Colombia!

Harry LeGrand



One of the last frontiers in birding South America is the country with the world's largest bird list – Colombia – at roughly 1,870 species. Of course, we know why few North Americans have birded Colombia: cocaine and other drugs, much civil unrest in the past, and poor or no facilities for birders and other tourists. Interestingly, U.S. citizens have not been prohibited from visiting Colombia, unlike Cuba. And, also surprisingly, two well-known U.S. birders covered Colombia back in the 1970s and 1980s in writing several of the best bird reference books – Steven Hilty (along with William Brown) and his *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia* (1986) and Robert Ridgely (along with Guy Tudor) and his two-volume *The Birds of South America* (1989 and 1994). Yet, the concern about safety, especially in remote areas, has kept most birders away from the country – or better stated, has kept nearly all birding tour companies away from the country, at least until new birding preserves and lodges have been opened.

Thankfully, in the past several years, quite a few birding companies have begun offering tours to parts of Colombia, mostly to the same general areas. That is, the birders visit the isolated Santa Marta Mountains and the nearby Caribbean coast and the Andes Mountains. In Colombia the Andes consist of three parallel ridges, instead of two in much of Ecuador. The Cauca River flows northward and separates the Western Andes from the Central Andes, and the Magdalena River flows northward to the east of the Cauca, flanked by the Central Andes on the west and the Eastern Andes. The vast lowlands that cover the eastern 55% of the country are typically not yet on itineraries, nor are the Amazonian rainforests and llanos (grasslands) that are more easily visited in Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, or Brazil.

As I have birded Venezuela twice, Suriname once, Ecuador about six times, Peru on several occasions, and parts of Brazil on three visits, it was time to hit Colombia. I signed up with Manu Expeditions, based in Peru and led by its English founder, Barry Walker, who has been living in South America for several decades. In addition to Barry, we had a local Colombian guide named Luis Eduardo Urena, along with an excellent birder from the states, Richard Webster, a Field Guides tour leader who was along to scout out itineraries for that company to begin offering trips in 2010. Four other birders – a couple from California, and gentlemen from Germany and England – were also along. Thankfully, Barry had led a similar trip in 2008. Our trip was from February 29 to March 20, 2009.

We knew the trip was going to be strenuous, as the itinerary had us hopping back and forth across all three ranges, beginning at Bogota (on a plateau in the Eastern Andes), heading northward to the Santa Martas and the Caribbean coast, and then back south again. We typically stayed at new or fairly new lodges at ProAves preserves. This organization is based in Colombia and is dedicated to conservation of birds and their habitats. As the trip moved along, it was obvious why we stayed at these places – that was essentially it! Colombia is not a common destination for U.S. or other outside tourists, as there are few snow-capped mountains, few historic towns with elegant churches or cultural sites (such as Machu Picchu in Peru), and few well-established montane or jungle lodges (such as Monteverde in Costa Rica, or La Selva and Sacha in Ecuador). And, Colombia is not as poor a country as is Ecuador or Peru, which means there has been much more habitat loss due to forest removal for cattle ranches and (to a lesser extent) coffee plantations. Most of the areas we drove through were cattle pastures, and the forests were mainly limited to ridge tops, well above the paved roads. We typically had to drive in a van along a paved road in one of the two valleys or in the lower portions of the mountains, drop off the van in a small town, and hop into two four-wheel-drive vehicles to ride up bumpy dirt roads/ tracks to lodges on the middle or upper slopes.

We spent our first morning at a well-known park at the outskirts of Bogota, getting the "big four", all essentially Colombian endemics – Bogota Rail, Apolinar's Wren, Rufous-browed Conebill, and Silvery-throated Spinetail. We then had a flight westward for an hour, got into two Jeeps, and visited a site on the western flank of the Central Andes, getting a couple of more key endemics, such as Cauca Guan and Chestnut

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Birding Colombia

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Wood-Quail. (Yes, birding Colombia's Andes involves hitting six sets of habitats – the eastern and western flanks of each of the three ranges!)

Naturally, there were hits and misses, and I personally hate "misses" at preserves that are named after the very rare bird species that the land was purchased to protect! We did hear a Blue-billed Curassow, and we came mighty close to a singing Recurve-billed Bushbird, but you know the story. And, several of us happened to be in the wrong spot at the wrong time to see Black-and-gold Tanager, etc. But, Northern Screamer, Crested Ant-Tanager (my favorite lifer of the trip), Sooty Ant-Tanager, Turquoise Dacnis, Gray-throated Warbler, and dozens of other lifers were seen on the way north.

The pace slowed, thankfully, once we reached the city of Santa Marta, after an eight-hour drive. We were able to relax along the beach in the afternoon, or if you were Barry, were glued to the television watching your beloved and hometown Manchester United soccer (oops, "football") team clobber another European team in one of those Whatever Cup matches that take place once or twice each year. (No, it wasn't the World Cup in 2009!) Birding the mangroves and cacti at Salamanca National Park west of the city yielded a few endemics like Chestnut-winged Chachalaca. Birding some desert scrub east of the city yielded several spectacular male Vermilion Cardinals, which put Northern Cardinals to shame. Then, we headed southeast for a few nights in the Santa Marta range, the highest elevation in Colombia, even though not part of the Andes. This range has about 16 endemic birds, found nowhere else, not even in the Andes! A few occur too high (above roads) in the range, or are "off limits" to the east, but most tour groups, including ours, do see about a dozen endemics, a number of which are named Santa Marta # (e.g., Antpitta, Parakeet, Bush-Tyrant, Mountain-Tanager, Warbler, etc.). We also saw an undescribed screech-owl very close to the lodge where we stayed; few tours have ever seen it.

The tour ended at several preserves back to the south, where we saw such spectacular species as the Yellow-eared Parrot and Red-bellied Grackle, both highly endangered. We were able to see a newly described cotinga, the Chestnut-capped Piha, as well. In total, we saw and heard about 630 bird species, about 55 of which are Colombian endemics. I saw close to 80 lifers, many more than my usual 30-40 on a given trip. But, sadly, I can't go on any more trips to South America that will yield anywhere near that number again. Naturally, this was a great trip, and it went off without a real glitch in terms of flights, vehicles, lost drivers, road problems, flat tires, personal illness/injury, and the like. Such a complicated itinerary could not have been possible without cell phones and without the experience and clout of our leader. If Barry wants something to get done, it gets done! That's why going with a tour owner (not just any tour leader) who lives and has birded in South America for 20 or more years has advantages.

What recommendations do I have for birders thinking about a trip or two to Colombia? First, make sure you have already been to one or more other countries in the Neotropics for birding before plunging into Colombia; Belize, Trinidad/Tobago, Mexico, and Costa Rica are recommended first plunges because of easier travel and accommodations, fewer birds to learn, etc. Second, make sure you go birding with a group, and the larger the better (at least, 10 people is better than 2 or 3), for safety reasons. Of course, I recommend an established tour group, and it helps if the itinerary has already been run once or twice before. If you are not into going with tour companies, then you almost have to have a native Colombian birder/guide along, or someone who knows how to get to the sites, knows how safe the birding areas are, and knows Spanish extremely well. Too often on foreign birding trips, people want to skimp on costs and rent their own vehicle, do their own driving, make their own lodging arrangements, etc. That won't work in Colombia. Birding spots are few and far between, and are difficult to reach (often on very poor roads/tracks, with few or no signs leading a visitor to the sites). Nearly all of the roadsides in the country are cattle pastures or other disturbed lands, with scattered trees left standing for

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Birding Colombia

(Continued from page 3)

cattle to rest in the shade; thus, you cannot simply stop along roads and see much variety, much less the highly desired endemic species.

Incidentally, the hectic itinerary that we did won't be done again; instead, Barry will split it into two trips. A number of companies, including one by the Carolinas own Ventures Birding Tours (operated by Simon Thompson), now offer a short 5-7 days in the Santa Martas, including the coastal deserts and mangroves. And companies simply cannot visit the 10-15 central and southern hotspots in a single trip. So, a given Andes trip might cover mostly the Magdalena Valley and its adjacent Eastern and Central Andes; and another might cover the Cauca Valley and its Western Andes and some Central Andes. The latter might also try to hit some of the rich Choco eco-region on the Pacific flank of the Western Andes, which is ultra-rich in species. (However, there are still dangerous pockets in Colombia, including some of the Choco and southwestern mountains, and the eastern Santa Martas and the adjacent Perija Mountains.) I'm looking over various catalogs for additional trips to Colombia; I can't wait to visit new spots, and even to hit some of my "old haunts" to take care of those misses! Ecotourism is slowly getting a toe-hold in Colombia, though it lags far behind all neighboring countries, including Panama. New preserves are being acquired, and new lodges are opening up. Hummingbird feeders, so prevalent in Ecuador, are beginning to spring up in Colombia.

Derb Carter, Will Cook, and John Dole, North Carolina birders familiar to most readers, covered many of the spots in July 2009 that I visited in March. Naturally, we each got some goodies the others missed, but I can't let them get away with seeing Scarlet-and-white Tanagers and a pair of Chestnut-crested Cotingas!

The opinions expressed in the CBC Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Carolina Bird Club or its members, but are those of the authors who have contributed material. All CBC members are encouraged to submit content for publication. Submitted articles may be edited for style, content, or length prior to publication. Submissions may be made in electronic format to newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org, or by mail to the address on the back cover.

Maine Birding Trail

Planning a trip to Maine to add a Bicknell's Thrush to your list or to visit the puffins of Machias Seal Island? From Boreal forests filled with warblers and moose to rocky, windswept islands hosting nesting alcids, Maine offers much to the traveling birder. For those who might like to bird their way across the country's eastern-most state, a copy of the recently released Maine Birding Trail brochure may be for you. This 34-page booklet provides a brief overview of selected birding sites across the state, a checklist of Maine's birds, and a list of travel resources. The brochure is free, but in order to fully prepare yourself for a birding trip "down east", you will probably want to take a look at The Official Guide to the Maine Birding Trail, which offers in-depth information on the sites noted in the brochure, as well as dozens of other sites not mentioned. So in a way, the brochure is a teaser for the book, but it's an attractive, useful, and handy teaser to have. To order a free copy of the brochure, go to www.VisitMaine.com/birdingtrail. To find out more about the Official Guide, currently retailing for $15.95, visit www.downeastbooks.com

Read The Chat and the Newsletter anywhere you have Internet access!

The most recent editions of the Newsletter and The Chat are online on the CBC website. Older editions of The Chat are free for anyone to download, but the CBC Newsletter and the two most recent calendar years of The Chat are available only to CBC members. All CBC members will use the same username and password to access these publications. The username is "**member**" and the password is "**birdfun**".

This is a membership benefit, please don't share the password with non-members! The password will be changed from time to time, but can always be found in the most recent print edition of the Newsletter.

Go to http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/newsletter
to access the Newsletter, and
http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat
to access The Chat.

North Carolina Peregrine Falcon Nesting Results for 2009

Christine Kelly

Twelve of the thirteen "known" territories were occupied this year. Falcons were not found at Moore's Wall (Hanging Rock State Park).

Nest success was low at 25%, and just three of the twelve nesting pairs were successful in raising young:

- Big Lost Cove (Avery Co.): 1 offspring
- White Rock Cliff (Madison Co.): 3 offspring
- Shortoff Mountain (Burke Co.): 3 offspring

Productivity was the lowest it has been in ten years at 0.58 nestlings/pair (based on 7 nestlings from 12 nesting pairs). Multiple factors may explain widespread nest failure including:

- a cold, wet spring that posed a challenge for hunting and the nestlings' ability to thermoregulate (possibly played a role at Grandfather Mountain, Devil's Courthouse, Buzzard's Roost, and other sites, but we really can't know for sure);
- disturbance from climbers (especially at Looking Glass, Whitesides, otherwise adherence to closures was pretty good);
- predation;
- young, inexperienced birds at two or more sites (second year birds at Panthertail and Dunn's Rock; possibly returning three-year-olds at Chimney Rock, Grandfather Mountain, and White Rock);
- competition and harassment from unpaired falcons invading a territory (doeumented at Whitesides and NC Wall).

Brown Pelican De-listed

In November 2009, the U.S. Department of the Interior removed the Brown Pelican from the Endangered Species List. Greatly assisted by a ban on the pesticide DDT in the early 1970s, the iconic waterbird has made an impressive recovery along the southeastern U.S. coast, the Gulf coast, and in the Caribbean.

Notice of Proposed Dues Increase

(this note originally ran in the Nov/Dec 2009 edition of the CBC Newsletter)

After discussion at its Annual Planning Retreat, the CBC Executive Committee recommended that an annual dues increase of five dollars to Individual Memberships, Sustaining Memberships, and Business Memberships was necessary to maintain the current high level of programs and service the Club offers its members. The Club has not seen an increase in yearly dues since 1999.

Increased revenues will ensure that quality seasonal meetings will continue to be staged for the membership, and that the quality of Club publications, the Chat and Newsletter, will be maintained. The proposed increase would take effect after the next seasonal meeting (Atlantic Beach, NC Jan. 29-31, 2010) at which the Executive Committee will present the following recommended dues schedule to the membership as is required by Club by-laws:

Article II Section 4 of the by-laws of the Carolina Bird Club states:

"The dues schedule (the frequency and amounts to be collected) shall be established by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership. A notice through the Newsletter of proposed changes in dues schedules shall be provided the membership prior to the meeting for which action is contemplated."

Recommended Dues Schedule to be approved at Winter 2010 meeting:

- Individual or non-profit: $25
- Associate (in household with individual): $5
- Student: $15
- Sustaining (open to businesses): $30
- Life Membership: $400
- Associate Life Membership: $100

In addition, the Executive Committee has enacted a five dollar increase in meeting registration fees, beginning with registration for the Winter 2010 Atlantic Beach Meeting. An increase in seasonal meeting registration fees has not occurred since 2004.

Bears and Jaegers, Oh My!
Wings Over Water 2009

Steve Shultz

The 13th annual Wings Over Water birding and nature festival was held November 3-8, 2009 along the northeastern North Carolina coast. Field trips ranged from a Gulf Stream pelagic trip for the hard-core birder to Birding 101 classes that taught participants how to sight birds in binoculars and how to identify the more common local avian residents. In between, numerous trips visited prime birding locations such as the marshes of Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet for maritime sparrows, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren and rails; North and Sound Pond at Pea Island N.W.R. for ducks, waders, and shorebirds; and Palmetto Peartree Preserve for Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Paddle trips, photography workshops and natural history trips provided additional opportunities to experience the nature and beauty of the Outer Banks and adjacent wild lands.

Black Bear at Alligator River N.W.R.

The Friday evening keynote speech featured a pair of stunning slide shows featuring Mark Buckler, an Outer Banks resident and photographer. Mark shared secrets of taking excellent bird and nature photographs, as well as entertained with stories behind some of the more unusual pictures.

Bodie Island Lighthouse reflected in the pond on a calm morning

While the weather in November along the narrow spine of barrier islands that constitute the Outer Banks can often be tempestuous, the 2009 festival enjoyed generally good conditions. Attendees during the 2008 event may remember rain falling sideways until large puddles covered most parking lots and the medians of Highway 12. This year's festival enjoyed a rain-free run, although a brisk 20-25 knot northerly wind on Friday made birding challenging and put spotting scopes not on sturdy tripods at risk of ending up somewhere unpleasant. As if to make up for her folly, Mother Nature provided stunning weather for Saturday and Sunday with warm temperatures, calm winds, and sunny skies.

Some of the more exciting birds found or seen during the festival include Roseate Spoonbills at Buxton, a Lapland Longspur at the north end of Pea Island, Western Kingbird on Roanoke Island, Painted Bunting at Alligator River N.W.R., and an adult male Common Eider flying south in a large flock of scoters. Participants on the Cape Point field trips saw several Parasitic Jaegers chasing terns and gulls, and the pelagic trip participants marveled at a cooperative Pomarine Jaeger that floated alongside the boat.

Look for the 14th edition of this excellent birding and nature festival in November 2010 and come out to the Banks for nature, fun, and excellent birding!

CBC Members Enjoy a Great Bonus Trip to Huntington Beach S.P.

Steve Shultz

Sixteen members of the Club enjoyed a birdy weekend exploring the marshes, beaches, and maritime forests of South Carolina's Grand Strand during the Huntington Beach State Park Bonus Trip December 5th and 6th, 2009. An unfavorable weather forecast for Saturday resulted in the trip being run twice, once on Saturday for those who could not change plans, and again on Sunday for those who chose to wait for better weather. As it turned out, the heavy rains forecast for Saturday occurred during the night, leaving a cloudy, but much drier than expected day.

Highlights on Saturday included an excellent chance to study the "maritime sparrows", with Seaside Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow (both interior and coastal breeders) and Saltmarsh Sparrow courteously sitting in plain view for minutes at a time. At one point nearly two dozen assorted sparrows were visible at once! For those who have spent hours skulking around marsh edges hoping for fleeting glimpses of a marsh sparrow, you can imagine the delight of the group!

Later in the morning Cave Swallows and a White-winged Scoter in "Mallard Pond" were well seen by all participants as we viewed from the carriage path. The Cave Swallows were either a "life bird" or "state bird" for most in attendance. On the ocean, point blank looks at loons, a fly-by Common Eider, and the sight of hundreds of birds swirling around a shrimper in the inlet punctuated a day where more than 90 species were seen.

The Sunday group enjoyed sunnier, if not slightly windy, conditions. Maritime sparrows resorted to playing hide and seek, and the Cave Swallows disappeared, but the group enjoyed two Common Eiders at the jetty, Purple Sandpiper on the rocks, and witnessed some very interesting behaviors of more commonly seen species.

The first of these encounters occurred at the end of the salt marsh boardwalk while the group was sparrow searching. A pair of Ring-billed Gulls sitting on the railing began vocalizing, head bobbing, and locking bills. The gulls eventually tumbled off the railing and into the water below. Undeterred, the birds continued to struggle for the upper hand, with one pushing the other under water several times, until, several hundred digital pictures later, the gulls separated and swan serenely side by side as if nothing had happened.

Barred Owl

The Sunday group also enjoyed entertainment during lunch as we watched a Barred Owl "fishing" in a broad rain puddle formed during Friday night's deluge. After observing the owl fly in to a Live Oak near the picnic tables, we watched in awe as the bird dropped from its perch, glided across the water, and reminiscent of an Osprey or Bald Eagle, threw talons forward, plucked something from the water, and then proceeded to a convenient perch to consume the prey. Over the next half-hour, the owl made several more sorties, usually to the water's edge, returning to a perch with some morsel of food. Cut worms, insects? No one could tell exactly what was being consumed, but the owl appeared to be quite successfully foraging.

The group ended up with 102 species for the weekend, but enjoying the outdoors at one of South Carolina's finest coastal birding locations was likely the highlight for most. (although those "life birds" were pretty nice too!)

Spring 2010 Meeting (continued)

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lowed by a program by John Sill, www.johnsill.com, a nationally acclaimed wildlife artist, illustrator and author. We will hear about his birding adventures as he teaches us how to draw a bird. That's right! We will all put pencil to paper and learn to accurately sketch a bird!

Saturday evening, Audubon of Forsyth County will host a dessert reception at our hotel. While enjoying homemade sweets, we will have a free-form and free-wheeling event called "The Well Equipped Birder". We will have tables staffed by members willing to demonstrate and discuss the latest and greatest equipment, including binoculars, scopes, cameras, tripods, digiscoping, iPods/BirdJams, iPhones/ iTouch, software, books, DVDs/CDs, and who knows what else. If you have something to share, let us know at lucyq@carolina.rr.com or waxwing@bellsouth.net.

Our host hotel is The Village Inn at exit 184 off I-40, Lewisville-Clemmons Rd. (www.thevillageinn.com) It is centrally located for our field trips and was totally renovated just three years ago. The special CBC room rate, double or single, is $74 plus tax, which includes a full hot breakfast starting at 6:00 a.m. Make reservations by **March 29** at 800-554-6416 or 336-766-9121. Be sure to ask for the CBC rate. *There are no elevators in this two-story hotel, so reserve early if you need a first floor room.*

In the next newsletter we will have field trip descriptions, buffet dinner information, and the registration form. In the meantime, check out www.johnsill.com, read more about some of the area birding hotspots at http://www.ncbirdingtrail.org/TrailGuide/Guide_NorthwestPiedmont.pdf and www.forsythaudubon.org/html/birdingspots.html.

Get the dates on your calendar (April 30 – May 2, 2010) and book your hotel room early! We'll see you there!

Mattamuskeet Changes

Birders visiting Lake Mattamuskeet NWR in Hyde County, NC may have noticed some recent changes. The refuge finally obtained funding and equipment to clear out canals that had become choked with silt. Many miles of canals have been cleared, restoring the ability to better manage water levels in the lake and its impoundments. This work is ongoing, and a plan to replace the bridge over the main canal (near the pumphouse) is in the works.

One result of the operation to dredge the canals is that many of the tall trees, especially pines, that used to line the canals along wildlife drive are now gone, replaced with an earthen berm, giving the wildlife drive a new look and feel. The road along the south and east end of the entrance road impoundment is now open to vehicular traffic, and birders can circle this productive birding area by car.

Welcome New Members!

The CBC warmly welcomes the following new members:

Claire Aubel
Newport, NC

Lewis Burke
Columbia, SC

Marjorie Foster
Pinehurst, NC

Mark Gretch
Lauringburg, NC

Sabrina Grogan
Charleston, SC

Betty Keyes
Roanoke Rapids, NC

Chris Kicinski
Harrisburg, NC

Matthew King
Southern Pines, NC

Kathy Larson
Apex, NC

Fred Lobdell
Macon, NC

Carolyn Powell
Brevard, NC

Carolyn Rich
Raleigh, NC

Southside Bird Club
Dry Fork, VA

Lynne Mattocks Lucas

Deceased Member

Phillip Crutchfield

CBC Bonus Trip: A Taste of Arizona!

Most discussions of the best birding locations in the United States eventually include Southeastern Arizona. The diversity of habitats, stunning natural beauty, easy travel conditions, and promise of dozens of types of birds found nowhere else, or nowhere more easily, in the United States speaks to why a trip to Arizona is at the top of many traveling birder's wish lists.

The CBC is pleased to announce a bonus trip to Southeastern Arizona **May 28th to June 2nd, 2010**. We will focus on finding and observing breeding birds and late migrants in the "sky island" mountain ranges of the Santa Ritas and Huachuchas and the surrounding desert, visiting locations such as Madera Canyon, Patagonia, Garden Canyon, Scheelite Canyon, Sawmill Canyon, Ramsey Canyon, Miller Canyon, and Saguaro National Park.

While many trips to Arizona occur at the onset of the summer monsoons, in late July or August, to take advantage of hummingbird migration and late-season breeders, a trip in late May/early June arguably provides a better opportunity to find and enjoy many of the species of birds that make Arizona famous. Elegant Trogans should be visible and vocal as they patrol territories, Elf Owls peer from nesting cavities at dusk, and many flycatchers are just arriving and are conspicuous as they search for mates and begin nesting. Plumages are fresh and birds are singing, often in numbers greater than those found later in the season.

We'll visit the saguaro studded desert for Rufous-winged Sparrow, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, rattlesnakes and maybe even a Gila Monster, before heading to the mountains. With one night near majestic Madera Canyon and two nights in Sierra Vista, just minutes from Ramsey, Miller, Garden, and Sawmill Canyons, we will take advantage of the long hours of daylight to see as many of the sights, sounds, and of course birds, as possible.

This trip begins and ends in Tucson, Arizona. Included in the **trip fee of $775** is lodging (double occupancy), transportation, entry fees, and guided birding each day. Not included is transportation to and from Tucson, meals, and items of personal nature. A deposit of $300 is due by March 15, 2010 with the balance due by April 14, 2010. Contact Steve Shultz for information on single supplements.

Interested? Act soon, as the **number of participants is limited to ten** (with a minimum of eight). This will ensure that everyone enjoys a window seat in the vehicles with plenty of room to enjoy the views as we travel from desert to grassland to mountaintop.

Detailed information including lodging details, bird check lists, and a day-by-day summary of activities will be provided upon registration, but an overview of the schedule is listed below:

Friday - arrival in Tucson. Depending on arrival time, birding at Saguaro National Park or optional excursion for Common Black-Hawk. Overnight in Tucson.

Saturday - Madera Canyon and grasslands. Overnight in Green Valley (probability of nesting Elf Owls in Madera).

Sunday - Madera Canyon, Nogales, Patagonia. Overnight in Sierra Vista.

Monday - Garden, Scheelite, and Sawmill Canyons. Overnight in Sierra Vista.

Tuesday - Ramsey Canyon Preserve, Miller Canyon, Mary Jo Ballator's B&B (hummers and desert species). Overnight in Tucson. Dusk drive for snakes and reptiles.

Wednesday - Saguaro National Park. (plan for departing flights no earlier than 1 p.m.)

Trip leaders for "A Taste of Arizona!" will be **Steve Shultz** and **Brian Pendergraft**, who have each made several trips to the locations we will visit and look forward to sharing them with you.

To reserve your space on this trip, or for more information, contact Steve Shultz at sshultz@nc.rr.com or (919) 779-2826.

CBC Bonus Trip: Whooping Cranes & More On the Central Texas Coast March 20-28, 2010

The complex bay, barrier island, and marsh ecosystems of the Central Texas Coast teem with water-associated birds of a wide variety. This region harbors major populations of Reddish Egret and other members of the heron family, ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, American Oystercatcher, and numerous terns. The coastal bays, mudflats, and nearby fields attract most of the North American shorebirds, while the vast marshes shelter specialties like Least Bittern, Clapper Rail, and Seaside Sparrow. Raptors are a frequent sight on the coastal prairie, including the beautiful White-tailed Hawk in its major U.S. breeding area, plus White-tailed Kite, and Crested Caracara. Woodland birds of the eastern forests reach their southern limit in this region, while a few of the South Texas birds extend their ranges northeastward to the isolated patches of brush here.

We can expect to see the magnificent Whooping Crane on its wintering grounds at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. We will tour the refuge on land and again by boat as we cruise on the "Skimmer" out of Fulton, TX. Other Texas specialties include – Least Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, White-faced Ibis, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Mottled Duck, Cinnamon Teal, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Inca Dove, Groove-billed Ani, Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Great Kiskadee, Couch's Kingbird, Green Jay, Black-crested Titmouse, Long-billed and Curve-billed Thrashers, Sprague's Pipit, Pyrrhuloxia, Olive Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, and Bronzed Cowbird.

We plan an all-day tour of the King Ranch, which should be an unmatched birding experience. With some of the rarest breeding birds in the U.S. like the Ferruginous Pygmy-owl and Tropical Parula, AND habitat for migrating passerines, the ranch is a wonderful place to bird. Other species we'll look for on the ranch include Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Audubon's Oriole, Botteri's Sparrow, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Harris's Hawk, and Burrowing Owl.

We will fly to San Antonio and drive to Corpus Christi where we will be based for 7 nights, minimizing packing and un-packing. **Attendance is limited to 11** people plus the leader. **Estimated price of $800.00** includes lodging, transport vehicle, tour/trip/entrance fees and guide service. A single supplement of $200.00 is expected. Participants are responsible for the cost of their airfare to/from Texas and all meals. (Our hotel offers a deluxe continental breakfast, but there will be days when we must leave before it is served). **To ensure a place on the trip, an initial deposit of $150.00 must be received by February 15, 2010 and the balance by March 1.**

To reserve your space on this trip, or for more information, contact Bruce Smithson at (910) 538-1441. brucesmithson@netscape.net.

Long-billed Curlew

Whooping Crane

Huntington Beach State Park, SC
Bonus Field Trip, March 13 -14, 2010

Huntington Beach State Park is described in the two principal guides to birding in S.C. as possibly the best birding site in the state. Join us for a late winter/early spring survey of the birds at "HBSP" as we visit the varied habitats in the park (diverse wooded areas, lake and ponds, marshes, beaches and ocean, jetty).

We will spend the entire Saturday in the park, and Sunday morning either revisiting parts of the park or visiting other nearby birding spots.

The latest HBSP bird checklist can be found at http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/files/State%20Parks/hbsp_bird_list.pdf

Fee: $10

Logistics:
We will meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Litchfield Beach and Golf Resort on US 17 just south of the entrance to HBSP (14276 Ocean Hwy, Pawleys Island, SC 29585) to carpool to the park.

HBSP charges $5 per person entrance fee unless you have an annual State Park pass (which admits all the occupants of a vehicle at no charge).

Be prepared for a 1.5 mile walk on the beach each way to the jetty at the northern end of the park.

Dress for the weather – it can be cold and windy at the jetty!

Bring a scope if you have one, drinks, snacks and a picnic lunch.

Restrooms are located at several convenient places in the park.

To register:
Contact Paul Serridge at paulserridge@yahoo.com. After receiving confirmation of your place on the roster, please complete the form below and return it to the address indicated with the required fee.

CBC Huntington Beach Bonus Field Trip Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening phone _____ Email _____

I am enclosing $_____ for the following bonus field trips:

Huntington Beach, SC Bonus Trip ____ x $10 = $ _____

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trip leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip.

I release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and/or Club field trips. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of any such minors and that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature _____ Date _____ Signature _____ Date _____

☐ Please update my address or other contact information on Club mailing lists as listed above

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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Winston-Salem, NC April 30-May 2, 2010
Aiken, SC September 24-26, 2010

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